

# Tech Center for Biodefense to open Tuesday

By Michael Castellon/Staff Reporter

Texas Tech will open its Center for Biodefense, Law and Public Policy on Tuesday at the university's School of Law.

The grand opening event is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m., and Congressman Ralph Hall of Texas' Fourth District will speak on issues relating to the First Amendment and biodefense policy.

The centers' faculty will remain available for consultation in areas of government, industry and association.

Victoria Sutton, director of the center and a professor of law, said the center will provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration in the area of biodefense, while addressing law and public policy issues.

"This is going to be a great opportunity for the university and the community," she said. "This facility will work in a collaborative effort in various disciplines such as law, political science, microbiology and mass communications."

The center also will work in collaboration with professionals from

the fields of medicine, forensic pathology and public policy, Sutton said.

The center will operate under the Tech University System Task Force on Antiterrorism and Public Security.

The task force was implemented last year by Tech Chancellor Dr. David Smith and President David Schmidly following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The task force is comprised of faculty and administrators to determine how the university can better provide security and research in response to the attacks.

Brian Gerber, assistant professor of political science and a member of the center, said the center will serve as a useful resource to researchers of public policy and bioterrorism issues. "This is useful in that Tech is showing the initiative in starting a

center like this that will promote the study of these issues that will be a major concern for a long time," he said.

Gerber is conducting research aimed at examining the organizational structure of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"What I'm starting to work on is research related to what that department's structure means to public policy," he said. "There are some major questions that need to be asked when examining homeland security. Those questions include how long

will it take before (the department) is managed in a most efficient way and whether the organization of the agencies within the department will result in a well-defined mission."

Sutton said the center is currently planning a legal issues and bioterrorism symposium in February, an event that will likely draw distinguished experts from a variety of disciplines.

The center also is exploring collaborations with other academic centers and institutions across the nation, she said.

